
Colonial Update

Principal's Message

64 Holden Street • Shrewsbury, MA 01545

April 2006



Mission Statement:

The Shrewsbury High School community provides challenging, diverse learning opportunities; promotes creativity and independent thinking; and empowers students to become capable, caring, active contributors to the world in which they live.

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

Several study groups comprised of teachers, students, administrators, and parents have been busy researching and discussing high school initiatives this year:

- The Personalization Study Group has been meeting to consider ways to personalize the Shrewsbury High School experience for each student. We have been studying ways we can build connections between students and adults in an increasingly large high school environment so that no student goes unnoticed or gets lost in the crowd. This is especially important as the high school enrollment soars. (In seven years our enrollment has increased by 600 students!) We have discussed expanding homeroom; trying to create learning experiences for some students with the same teacher between freshman and sophomore year; and we have been rethinking our daily schedule to, perhaps, integrate one long block in each day to provide expanded and more personalized learning opportunities for students and teachers.

- The Assessment Study Group has been working under the leadership of social studies teacher, Maureen Monopoli and Mr. Todd Bazydlo, Assistant Principal for Curriculum this year to discuss assessment practices and the high school's expectations for student learning. The Assessment Study Group reviewed and revised our expectations for student learning in an effort to create the standards by which we will assess student work and learning. The revised expectations have been trimmed from thirteen to eight and, eventually, students will receive a score of Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, or Fail for each expectation. The Assessment Study Group expects that students will continue to receive traditional grades (i.e., A, B, C, etc.) on report cards but these grades will be based on the expectations for student learning using agreed upon and defined rubrics.

- The Senior Year Study Group continues to struggle with defining the senior year experience for each twelfth grader. Nationally, there has been a discussion about creating opportunities for seniors to avoid "senioritis" and to provide expanded learning experiences for young men and women in their last year of formal schooling. At Shrewsbury High School the Senior Year Study Group has been responsible for implementing our Senior Exhibition program and the Advanced Career Exploration (ACE) program for interested seniors. Both programs provide seniors with an opportunity for independent learning and, in the case of Senior Exhibition, a chance to be creative. One senior, for example, is currently designing and creating a huge mural in the school's Commons area. The Senior Year Study Group is discussing the possibility of requiring all seniors to complete some senior project, an exhibition or internship, for example, before graduation. This would require additional resources and staffing, so we recognize the need to proceed cautiously. The study group also is considering ways to implement basic financial planning, interviewing skills, and resume building into the senior year curriculum.

These study groups will continue their work throughout the spring and into next year. Along the way they will make recommendations to the faculty for implementation and program development. The annual School Improvement Plan will provide one more update about their work as the school year concludes. I welcome your input and suggestions for each initiative.

Many, many thanks for the wonderful luncheon provided by parents to our teachers on March 17th. Our staff and our Senior Greeters enjoyed a delicious banquet thoughtfully prepared by dozens and dozens of parents. Believe me when I say that our entire staff appreciates this lunch and the tremendous support of our parent community!

Sincerely,
Daniel Gutekanst
Principal